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ABSTRACT

The goals of the New York State Department of Education are: (1) to enlarge educational opportunity for the people of the State, (2) to provide the best possible quality in education; and (3) to accomplish those tasks with efficiency, economy, and demonstrable effectiveness. To achieve a society in which each person can realize his potential requires competent leadership and wise planning. The concept of postsecondary education should be broadened to include post-high school opportunities for all people. It is expected that students will be able to attend the institutions, public or private, which offer programs suited to their particular interests and needs. An all-inclusive educational system, embracing all of education in the State, would provide for continuous learning in skills and knowledge. The number of students who can benefit from instruction in private vocational schools is expected to continue to increase. Some areas of concern in meeting this need are: veterans' education, degree granting privileges, proposed legislation, accreditation, student loans, and manpower training programs. Private vocational schools are expected to become more involved in a comprehensive system of occupational education, a subpattern within a total system. Regional planning is required for specific objectives. (Author/AG)

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THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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NOTE: The attached remarks were made on September 17, 1970, at Homowack Lodge, Spring Glen, New York, on the occasion of the Annual Conference of the Private Vocational Schools Association of New York

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IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I shall speak for 25 minutes, and in case Jack Leslie and my colleagues in the Department do not know how long that will take, when I finish Spiro Agnew's big hand will be on 12 and his little hand on 9.

As you know, after being Acting Commissioner and then Commissioner for a year and a half, I was officially installed the other day.

There are two customs followed in the academic community in inaugurating a chief executive officer of an educational institution. The first is to have the irvestiture almost embarrassingly soon after he gets there, in order to be sure you've got him. The second is to put the ceremonies off as long as possible during the first year of tenure so the trustees can find out if he is still here.

As you can see, I am still here, and I guess that my main accomplishment has been that I have survived, which is no mean achievement, since I did not take this job to be popular.

I am delighted to be here and it is a relief to get away from Albany. But, physically, I feel a little like the person who was asked to be the main speaker at the annual convention of the American Psychiatric Association.

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After dinner, he was asked to lie down and say a few words.

Many people have asked me what it is like to be a new Commissioner of Education and what difference it has made in my life.

Well, one thing I have found is that a Commissioner of Education is expected to meet every imaginable issue -- with an open mouth. Not only that, but because the Commissioner becomes a symbol, everyone wants a piece of the action, and I get advice from every side. Frankly, already I am convinced I will not die from what is called in academic circles, presidential fatigue. It will be, rather, a slow death from data pollution.

Seriously, I am pleased with the expressions of support I have received, but knowing my own fallibility and the skepticism Americans usually reserve for their leaders, I am reminded just a little of the wife who read the fortune-telling card her husband got from a penny weighing machine. "You are a leader," she said, "with a magnetic personality and strong character -- intelligent, witty, and attractive to the opposite sex." Then she turned the card over and added, "It has your weight wrong, too."

My remarks tonight will cover several matters of concern to the Regents and the Department, as well as to the proprietary occupational schools of this State.

I would like to present some thoughts on the future of education and particularly post-secondary education, the role of the private schools in an all-inclusive structure; then review some of the current activities and

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progress in the private sector, and, finally, discuss the need for a total system of occupational education in which all resources are considered.

First, some general remarks about the future of education.

The goals we have in the Department are threefold: to enlarge educational opportunity for the people of this State, each according to his interests and talents; to provide the best possible quality in education, knowing that excellence has no ceiling; and to see to it that all of this is accomplished with efficiency, economy, and demonstrable effectiveness. Our ideals are the liberation of the human spirit, the release of human potential, and the enhancement and celebration of individual human dignity.

As the President of the University of Minnesota has said recently:

"We seek a society in which no man's potential is limited by lack of opportunity for an education comm. ensurate with his potential, in which no social problem festers for lack of educated intelligence to address it, in which mankind takes one more step toward realization of his capacity for a humane, generous and fulfilling life."

I am confident that with competent leadership and wise planning, we can give practical effect to that vision and take a big step in achieving it in this decade. To achieve that kind of society, as someone has remarked, we have to create an educational system that is free and open and compassionate and non-racist and productive. As one of our Regents has said, anything we do that does not have these goals and ideals as its ultimate aim, is waste;

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anything we do that does have these goals and ideals as its ultimate aim, is not only right -- it is holy.

We are committed, then, to the belief that human talent is the only source of our wealth, that the price of good education is an investment, not a cost, and if it is a cost, that the cost of education is cheap compared to the cost of ignorance.

How do we know when there is inequality of educational opportunity or when the quality is not good enough? The answer is eminently clear, even if it has to be stated somewhat simplistically: Inequality and lack of quality in educational opportunity exist wherever any individual human being is not living up to his innate capacity for productive good or wherever he is prevented from doing so by virtue of prejudice, poverty, or physical handicap. We have promises to keep, pledges to redeem, and miles to go.

In terms of post-secondary education, specifically, I see a broadening of the concept to include post-high school opportunities for all people rather than the narrow view of the academician whose definition of post-secondary education involves only limited collegiate degree programs.

Recently, the Board of Regents adopted a policy statement on post-secondary education that says: "...every high school graduate (or the equivalent) of the State should have an equal and open opportunity for post-secondary education, not limited to two and four year degree granting institutions, the opportunity to be unrestricted by race, color, creed, national origin, or economic condition.

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Every high school graduate who desires improvement in his skills, knowledge and understandings should have the opportunity to extend his education beyond high school if he so desires.

Opportunities should be provided for all high school graduates -- those who wish college level education, as well as those who seek other forms of post-secondary education. The social and economic imperatives of our time require an enlargement of the concept of post-secondary education to include a range of programs and experiences using the resources of public and private institutions of higher education, programs of varying lengths and purposes associated with those institutions, and programs available through proprietary schools, industrial training centers, and other educational facilities.

In the implementation of this policy, it is expected that students will be able to attend post-secondary institutions, whether public or private, which maintain programs suited to their particular interests and needs. The realization of this hope is, of course, dependent upon the will and cooperation of all post-secondary institutions in the State of New York, whether private or public.

The success of open admissions throughout the State will depend in large measure upon the harnessing of educational and training resources available outside of the traditional and formal structure of post-secondary education. Industrial inservice training programs, proprietary schools, self-study courses, and apprenticeships are available. These resources for post-secondary education must be mobilized in order to attain the

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educational objectives of the variety of talents and interests of the student population.

Within this framework, then, I am looking toward an all-inclusive educational system -- a true University of the State of New York, the institutional concept headed by the Board of Regents and which embraces all of education in the State, wherein all of the educational resources, public and private, and those in conjuction with business and industry, provide for the people of the State continuous opportunities for educational enlightenment, expansion of skills and knowledge, the ability to grow intellectually and at the same time obtain needed occupational skills to maintain and improve economic stability and job satisfaction.

It is within this perspective where the proprietary schools will find themselves as a true partner in the educational scheme and system in the period ahead.

There is need to develop a viable and responsive educational system in this State which includes both public and private education, though the systems may vary. Each serves a purpose in pursuing the elusive goal of providing the utmost in educational service for all citizens of the State whether they are in our elementary or secondary schools, institutions of higher learning, or whether they are out of school youth and adults who still need educational services to live in today's changing world.

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Despite steadily growing enrollments in colleges and universities, the potential number of students who can benefit frcm instruction in private occupational schools will probably continue to increase. This assumption is based upon two major conditions. First, only about half of all high school students in New York State are enrolled in an occupational program; second, nearly half of the students who enter two and four year collegiate programs do not complete the course or receive a degree.

We must give increased status to all kinds of worthy trade, technical, semiprofessional programs and institutions, increased emphasis to the notion that not everyone needs to go on to a bachelor's degree, and to the notion, too, that a gifted plumber is more worthy to be honored than a foolish philosopher. We are an enormously credentialed society with standards and employment requirements involving diplomas and degrees that seem designed to keep people out of careers and educational opportunities. Degrees, now a common currency, are only a sign that a person is not intellectually inadequate -- they have nothing to do with education. A collegiate education is not the only avenue to quality in education or to financially and intellectually rewarding lives.

I intend to see to it that there is growing recognition that there are other post-secondary roads to success and self-fulfillment besides our formal collegiate institutions. Increasingly, we shall see that the need and right of every young person to realize his or her potential through post-secondary education is accepted as vital to the public interest.

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Private occupational schools with their ability to motivate and train students with various needs and interests for specific occupational objectives will, in all likelihood, continue to flourish as a means of filling a gap in the educational structure.

Let me now identify some issues and concerns which should be of interest to the private trade schools.

First, Degree Granting Privileges

Up to the present time, private occupational schools were not able to offer an associate degree upon completion of a two-year program. Recently, the Board of Regents approved in principle, the awarding of associate degrees by proprietary occupational schools.

If a proprietary vocational school, business, trade or technical, meets the requirements of the statutes and regulations, it may be authorized by the Board of Regents to grant degrees. Our Division of Higher Education is presently preparing modification of the regulations to accommodate this change in Regent's policy. Hopefully, before the close of this school year private occupational schools will be able to request consideration for approval.

The major concern regarding approval to award degrees will relate to a possible revision of present standards of academic content required of two-year colleges in order to accommodate a single purpose institution, such as a private trade or business school.

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Secondly, Proposed Legislation

In 1937, New York became the first State to regulate private trade schools with the enactment of a private trade school law. Being first sometimes has its disadvantages. Dies are cast, patterns are set, and changes are more difficult to accomplish. For their time, the New York State laws were progressive and pioneering, but times have changed. The law now needs to be changed to accommodate present day requirements and the kind of schools which are developing, and also to control some practices which are outrageously unethical by any standard.

A number of problems have become evident over the years. One of them relates to schools preparing for occupations such as data processing, an occupation which came into existence after the original law was enacted. It is difficult to identify some of the new occupations as a trade, industrial or personal service occupation, when in reality the occupation may not be readily classified in any one of the three categories. With the assistance of representatives of the proprietary schools, a bill has been drafted which includes all private occupational schools in an approved system. Every private occupational school comes under the bill unless it is specifically identified as an exempted school. The bill will propose to include all business schools previously exempted. It does not seem reasonable or logical for a business school to operate without Department approval or having the option of voluntarily applying for registration by the Department while, at the same

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time, a school which wishes to teach drafting may not enroll the first student until it has secured a license from the Department and has met a long string of requirements.

The Federal constitution prohibits any state from enacting legislation which is in restraint of interstate commerce. This part of the Federal constitution has caused considerable concern because the State has been powerless to prevent salesmen representing out-of-state correspondence schools from doing business in an unethical and unwelcome manner. There have been a number of court cases which have attempted to modify this situation. For example, the courts have decided that it was proper for the State of Minnesota to tax an out-of-state corporation for the business that corporation conducted within the State of Minnesota. There are a number of similar decisions that the courts have returned. With the advice of several nationally recognized accrediting agencies and other states which regulate home study schools, included in proposed legislation will be a provision for licensing and bonding educational salesmen who sell courses in New York State. Essentially, when a resident of New York State enrolls in a course of instruction, whether it be home study or resident, within New York State's boundaries or outside of them, the contract between the student and the school would be null and void unless the agent holds a certificate or license from the Department. There have been many cases where New York State residents have been

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defrauded. The Department has worked with the Consumer Frauds Bureau of the Attorney General's office in a cooperative way, but present statutes do not give either the Education Department or the Attorney General's office adequate authority to do the job that needs to be done.

The Department will introduce this legislation again this year and will welcome continued support by associations such as your own. Won't you help us in gaining enactment of these pieces of legislation.

Thirdly, Accreditation

Accreditation is a word which many people and groups use and define usually for their own purposes. As Fats Waller once said to a dowager who asked what jazz was, "If you don't know what it is, don't mess with it." Educators contribute greatly to the confusion. The Department uses many different terms to indicate it has reviewed and found acceptable an educational program. We charter, license, register, approve and accredit, all to the confusion of the general public and many educators. The role of the Department fundamentally is to establish a minimum level below which no recognized educational program may operate. In our Anglo-Saxon legal framework, no one has a right to be as bad as he wants to be. But, more importantly, we have the responsibility to encourage every educational agency to achieve or even exceed their capabilities to offer sound education to our citizens.

We welcome those accrediting agencies that support our efforts. We have no conflict of purpose. I have made my position on accreditation

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clear on many occasions. I recognize the value of being measured by a peer group. Many of New York's private schools are presently accredited by national accrediting agencies. Others will require accreditation within the next few years in order to continue to participate in such federally aided programs as the vocational loan guarantee program. I urge you to pursue this matter carefully and deliberately in the period ahead.

Fourthly, Student Loans

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Higher Education Assistance Corporation, I am aware of your participation in both the Federal and State loan programs. There is a larger number of defaults among students in private occupational schools compared with college students -- you should realize the great responsibility you have to make this program a success. Enrolling students who have obtained guaranteed loans and are not likely to complete a course (and, therefore, may not be able to repay the loan) contributes to the increased cost of defaults. A disservice is done, not only to the student, but to the proprietary schools as well. Legislative support for guaranteed loans can be jeopardized by a significant number of defaults. I am alarmed at the shoddy practices which have been engaged in by some private vocational schools.

Fifthly, Veterans Education

In January 1970, the Department established a new Bureau of Veterans

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Education having the responsibility for approval and supervision of all institutional programs for veterans, war orphans, widows of veterans, and servicemen. As the State Approving Agency, our Bureau of Veterans Education consolidates the approval function for veterans and other eligible persons formerly performed by several divisions of the Education Department, as well as other departments, into one administrative unit. There is a national concern about the relatively smaller percentage of today's ex-servicemen taking advantage of their educational entitlement. We hope that this new bureau can improve our service to the educational community, and, thereby, assist the veteran to take full advantage of the G. I. bill. It should be noted that, unlike the two previous G. I. bills, the current law has no termination date. It is likely to continue as long as we have armed services (which probably means for some time to come). The Department is working with people at the Federal level to improve participation in this educational opportunity. There is an increased emphasis on adult basic education, as well as high school subjects. Special tutoring is includable to help a veteran adjust to his new learning situation, to help him when he is in danger of failure.

Sixthly, Manpower Training Programs

Many of the private trade schools have trained students under the Federal and State Manpower Programs as well as the Work Incentive Program. The schools that have had this experience are aware that these programs are directed toward a segment of our society for whom our efforts, both public

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and private, have previously failed. We ask you to be adaptable in meeting the needs of these yet unserved members of our population. In addition to the skill training now offered, programs will need to include remedial help to permit individuals to understand job instruction.

Although we view the private trade schools as a valuable educational resource in our manpower program, two things have occurred which reduced the extent to which the private schools participate. The first is a general reduction in funds available from a high of $50 million at one time to only $18 million today. The second deals with a mandate in the Federal statute that we must give priority in the assignment of manpower programs to the established skill centers. There are seven upstate and five in New York City, all under-utilized even with the Federal emphasis.

The requests for training that come to us from the State Employment Service, for the most part, follow the dictum of the Federal statute.

The State Plan directs most of the funds to the skill centers. However, in New York for the past three years, we have been able to use private schools for the conduct of some of the specific training in multi-occupational programs.

The private vocational schools can do their best work in the area of individual referrals. In many discussions that the Department staff has wi[illegible] the State Employment Service in the development of a program mix, the staff encourages the greatest possible use of the individual referral provisions of the Manpower Act. In some parts of the State this has been more successful

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than others. In the upstate area where there is the kind of clientele that could utilize the individual referral method, there is not the multiplicity of occupational choice available. In New York City, where there is a wide range of occupational choice, the clientele in need of manpower services require substantial remedial education before or during the skill training period.

Earlier, I stressed (a) the need for viewing our post-high school educational system broadly and (b) the goal of viewing open access for all to post-secondary opportunities and minimizing the concept of universal higher education attendance.

Let me turn, then, to the matter of a comprehensive system of occupational education. It is here where the private trade schools will find themselves more deeply involved. First, any system of occupational education must be viewed as a part of the total system of education. It cannot be separated out -- it cannot be developed independently of the rest of the educational program. Technical skills for a job are not enough to prepare a person for productive employment. These skills must be coupled with basic reading and number skills to be successful.

Thus, a system of occupational education is a sub-pattern within a total system. It begins at the earliest level in the elementary school, moves through the development of attitudes toward work, career orientation and pre-vocational exploratory experiences, before becoming more specific

at the upper high school level or in post-secondary institutions.

A comprehensive system must be designed to serve the needs and requirements of a total population, including, of course, the continuing education needs of adults, whether they are employed or unemployed.

Our view of such a system calls for the inclusion as resources to provide for such needs, every institution and agency which provides training or education for employment.

To accomplish the development of a total system will require planning -- careful, detailed planning, taking into account all the factors which make up the basis for planning. This includes information regarding the population to be served, the manpower requirements, as well as existing and projected programs.

In our judgment, such specific planning will need to be done at a regional level rather than statewide. For this reason, the Department earlier this year initiated action regarding regional planning for occupational education.

The system for regional planning for vocational education has involved the proprietary schools. There has been much favorable comment by private school directors regarding this involvement. We see in the regional planning system a way of assuring that the needs and requirements of the population in a specific area are served best and most economically, using all of the educational resources available to do the job. It is within the framework of

the plans which are now being developed where determinations will be made regarding the use of private trade schools as a part of the total delivery system for the preparation of people for occupations.

The regional plan will permit us to assess the availability of programs provided by all agencies and review them in the light of the requirements of the people, as well as of business and industry in the area. On the basis of this assessment, approval will be given for expansion of existing programs or the establishment of new ones.

Our concern is to achieve a balance of program opportunities, not an attempt to put the private sector out of business. We will, in the period ahead, consider the role of the private schools in the total system and the way in which they can play a significant part in providing trained manpower for New York State.

I should like, in closing, to leave with you my deep commitment to three interrelated concepts that say much for your concerns. First is the idea of the democracy of talent. A great variety of talent is necessary to make our society work. It depends upon a highly diversified range of decision-making and skills. To draw from the Biblical parable of the talents, we need one-talent men as well as five-talent men, and the failure of the one-talent man is not to realize how much he is needed. Secondly, is the idea of the democracy of excellence. I believe that excellence need not be a scarcity but is ubiquitous, can be present everywhere. Excellence in private vocational schools is every

bit as important as excellence in our universities. I believe with John Gardner that if we do not honor excellence in plumbing as well as excellence in philosophy, neither our pipes nor our theories are ever going to hold water. Finally, there must be a democracy of opportunity to match the varied talents we have in our people and whose potential must be released in order to make our society work effectively to provide self-fulfilment and personal benefit to those who possess them.

I commend you for your professionalism, for the quality of your standards, for your compassionate concern for people and their careers, and for the great contribution you are making to the diversity of educational opportunity we have in The University of the State of New York.

I hope I have given you some critical issues for discussion. I am reminded, hopefully, just a little of the track coach who had one youngster, not too coordinated and, unfortunately, afflicted with convergent strabismus (he was cross-eyed). He didn't know what to do with him and what events he should specialize in, but because he was a big strong kid, the coach finally made him a discus thrower. The coach found out very quickly that at track meets, the boy couldn't throw at all, but he certainly kept the crowds alert.

Best wishes for a pleasant and instructive conference.

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